

**City of Chelmsford Mencap is delighted to have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK and known as 'the MBE for volunteer groups'.**



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Recipients are announced each year on 2nd June, the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

The award particularly recognises CCM's strong volunteer ethos; a network of 45 unpaid volunteers is essential to the smooth running of everything our charity undertakes. This can-do approach has enabled CCM to move all its services online – and at speed – during the current pandemic and we are very grateful for everything our amazing team of staff, trustees, tutors and volunteers has achieved to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our members.

City of Chelmsford Mencap was nominated for the Queen's Award by former Chelmsford City councillors Duncan Lumley and Mike Holoway. Mr Lumley had previously recognised the group as one of his chosen charities during his term as Mayor.

CCM will receive the award from Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, Lord Lieutenant of Essex at a ceremony later this year. We will also be presented with a certificate signed by Her Majesty The Queen.

Nick Ross, CCM's chair of trustees at the time of the Award, sent this message to the charity's volunteers: "We are delighted that the huge contribution made by our volunteers has been recognised with such a prestigious award. All our volunteers, from school students to our trustees, give their time freely to ensure we are able to continue our important work, and without them, we would not have been able to take our services online in response to COVID-19. They are very much part of our close-knit team and we are extremely grateful to them."

Grace Lidstone, Adults' Services Manager, highlighted that the award also recognises the community work carried out by the charity's members: "Many of our Outreach Academy students give their enthusiasm and commitment to our various community projects, including our long-term horticulture projects at Broomfield Hospital and Farleigh Hospice, and the monthly Community Lunches. The Queen's Award recognises the many meaningful contributions that our students make in our local community and everyone at CCM is thrilled that our members too have been honoured in this way."

This is a very significant moment in the history of CCM. As we think about the importance of volunteering in our development, it's an ideal time to remember and thank all our former volunteers. They have been instrumental in developing the approach of welcoming, recognising and celebrating our volunteers which is being honoured today. This award is as much for them and we will always be grateful for their service to the charity.